

# NEW SCIENTIST

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Cromwell House, Fulwood Place, High Holborn, W.C.1.

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN 7554

TELEGRAMS: NEWSIENT, WESTCENT, LONDON

3 October, 1964

Professor J. Lederberg,  
Department of Genetics,  
Stanford University Medical Center,  
Palo Alto,  
California,  
USA.

Dear Joshua,

I have been giving a lot of thought lately to the future development of New Scientist and I am writing to invite your cooperation in helping us to produce a better paper. In particular I believe that the sheer readability and thoughtfulness of the paper can be greatly increased if we make substantially greater use of a small circle of scientists who are also first-class writers.

At present our policy (and it must in large measure continue) is to publish material prepared, often hurriedly, by whoever is the expert on a subject we are after. We do not re-write in the way that some other journals do, because we like to preserve the writer's individuality. The outcome, however, is something rather breathless and unpolished.

I would therefore like to suggest to you the possibility that you might undertake to write us a number of articles in the course of a year, on subjects to be agreed, which would be more essay-like (more relaxed, reflective and broad-minded) than either accounts of, or comments on, the latest news. They might, of course, be timely in their publication, but should be prepared in a fairly leisurely way with emphasis on exposition, the pursuit of stimulating ideas and general literary quality. In short, we are anxious to revive the colourful, tightly written scientific essay, in modern guise and with a wide readership in mind.

My reasons for suggesting that you should undertake a number of articles of this kind in the course of a year (and

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the figure that I have in mind is between 4 and 8, each of about 2000 words) are, first that you yourself may think it is not a one-off job but a continuing and worthwhile pursuit and, secondly, that our readers may come to identify you with the paper and look forward to your further contributions. We would expect to pay more than our usual rates for such a set of articles.

We are approaching a number of other people at the same time, so that you would be taking part in a general drive to reinvigorate science writing.

I have no preconceptions about what the subjects should be or even what the general character of the articles should be - except that they should be broadly concerned with "where we are going with science". In this programme I believe that the ideas should originate mainly from the contributor and that we should merely approve them in relation to what else we are doing.

Unfortunately I do not expect to visit the United States until next year. If you are not going to be in London in the near future perhaps we can work something out by correspondence.

*With best wishes,*

Yours sincerely,

*Nigel Calder*

Nigel Calder  
Editor